

John E. ...

INSIDE THE MIND OF A PYROMANIAC

WHAT IS MY PROBLEM? WHAT MAKES ME ENGAGE IN MALICIOUS ACTIVITY? IS IT BOREDOM, ANXIETY, ATTENTION SEEKING, THE EXCITEMENT OF FIREFIGHTERS DOING THEIR JOBS? WELL, BECAUSE OF THAT IT GAVE ME 21 YEARS! 21 YEARS AWAY FROM MY FAMILY, 21 YEARS OF HEARTACHE AND PAIN. AS OF DATE I TRY TO FIND THE INSIGHT OF WHAT CAUSED ME TO GO BACK INTO THE PYROMANIAC FRAME OF MIND.

MAY 24, 1998, MAY 30, 1998, JUNE 12, 1998 AND JUNE 23, 1998, THOSE WERE THE DAYS I STARTED THOSE FIRES (THE FIRST TIME). I WAS IN JUNIOR COLLEGE, AND AT THAT TIME MY MAJOR "FIRE SCIENCE," MY INSTRUCTOR WAS A BATTALION CHIEF FOR THE LONG BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT.

THESE FIRES WERE STARTED BECAUSE I WANTED THE ATTENTION THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT, MY PARENTS WERE NEVER HOME SO I SOUGHT ATTENTION ELSEWHERE. FROM JUNE 23, 1998 - JULY 3, 2002 (1,645 DAYS) WITHOUT A FIRE INCIDENT WITHIN THAT TIMEFRAME. WHAT WAS IT THAT SPARKED THE REBIRTH? I WASN'T ANGRY, DEPRESSED, FRUSTRATED, BUT I WAS BORED, SO IF I WAS THAT BORED I COULD'VE FOUND SOMETHING ELSE TO DO THAT WAS AT LEAST LEGAL.

I CAN KEEP TELLING MYSELF THAT OVER AND OVER AGAIN, BUT LET'S FACE REALITY, THAT I CAN'T UNRING A BELL AFTER IT'S BEEN RUNG, SO THAT GOES BACK TO THE QUESTION I'M SO DESPERATELY SEEKING AN ANSWER TO WHAT IS IT THAT CAUSED ME TO START 3 MORE FIRES? **ATTENTION!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

I'M NOT GONNA MAKE ANY EXCUSES LIKE I DID BEFORE IN MY COURT PROCEEDINGS WHEN I WAS FIGHTING MY CASE AND FOR MY LIFE. I DENIED EVER DOING IT, BUT I GAVE A CONFESSION AND TOLD HIM EXACTLY HOW I DID IT. YEAH, BUT YOU CLAIM HE VIOLATED YOUR RIGHTS BY TAPE RECORDING THE CONVERSATION WITHOUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE? WELL HE DID, BUT BACK THEN I DID NOT HAVE THE CASE LAW TO SUPPORT MY CONTENTIONS, BUT NOW THAT ALL MY HABEAS PETITIONS HAVE BEEN DENIED I CANNOT RAISE THAT ISSUE AGAIN, BUT TO BE TOTALLY HONEST IF I DIDN'T DO WHAT I DID THEN THERE WOULD HAVE NEVER BEEN NO VIOLATION UNDER STATE LAW.

WHY DID I DO IT? I WANTED TO SEE THE PEOPLE COME OUT OF THEIR HOUSES AND SEE THE FIRE THAT I CREATED INTENTIONALLY, NOT ONCE, NOT TWICE, BUT 3 TIMES. I WANTED SOME EXCITEMENT IN MY LIFE, I WAS BORED, DIDN'T HAVE ANY MONEY TO BUY FIREWORKS ON THE 4TH OF JULY, SO I MADE MY OWN FIREWORK, THAT EVERYBODY IN THE AREA COULD SEE. AT THE SCENE WAS ENGINE 2, ENGINE 10 ENGINE 4 AND TRUCK 1.

THE POLICE EVEN PUT UP THE CRIME SCENE TAPE UP, AND MY EGO RECEIVED A BOOST AND I FELT SO PROUD BUT WHY? CAUSE OF WHAT I DID AND EVERYONE SEEN MY PYROTECHNIC SKILLS? I DIDN'T GET PAID FOR IT, I DIDN'T OWN THE PROPERTY SO I DIDN'T COLECT ANY INSURANCE WHAT DID I GET? SELF GRATIFICATION, BUT WAS IT WORTH IT? AT THAT TIME **YES, NOW AS I'M MORE MATURE **HELL NO!!!****

AS I SIT HERE AND WRITE THIS OUT I MUST ADAMANTLY SAY THAT IT WASN'T, AND I AM ASHAMED AT MY EGREGIOUS CONDUCT. MY PARENTS MIGHT NOT EVEN BE ALIVE BY THE TIME I GET OUT OF PRISON, BUT I GOTTA STAND FIRM IN THE FAITH AND PRAY TO GOD WITH ALL SINCERITY IN MY HEART THAT HE KEEP THEM HERE ON EARTH SO I CAN SPEND SOME QUALITY TIME WITH THEM BEFORE THEY LEAVE ME.

SO WHY DID I START 3 FIRES ON JULY 4, 2002? THE ADRENALINE RUSH, THE EXCITEMENT OF STARTING FIRES AND BEING AT THE SCENE WHEN THE FIRE ENGINES PULLED UP, AND PUT OUT WHAT I STARTED. BUT I WASN'T FASCINATED WITH THE FIRE ITSELF, I WAS FASCINATED WITH THE LONG BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT. I KNEW WHERE EVERY FIRE STATION WAS, NO MATTER WHERE I WAS IN THE CITY OF LONG BEACH IF I HEARD A FIRE ENGINE I COULD BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY AND TELL YOU WHAT ENGINE IT WAS THAT WAS ABOUT TO COME ZOOMING BY.

I COULD TELL YOU HOW MANY PARAMEDIC UNITS THE LONG BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT HAD, HOW MANY SNORKEL ENGINES THEY HAD, AND HOW MANY LADDER TRUCKS, I KNEW EVERYTHING ABOUT THE LONG BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT. AND THAT'S WHERE I THOUGHT MY JOB WILL BE.

I COULD GO ON A RIDE ALONG WITH A SPECIFIC ENGINE COMPANY BECAUSE I KNEW THE CAPTAIN THERE. I'VE KNOWN HIM EVERY SINCE HE WAS A PARAMEDIC AT STATION 7, WHEN I LEFT HE WAS THE CAPTAIN OF ENGINE 10. I LOVED ENGINE 10 BECAUSE THEY WERE STATIONED IN THE HEART OF EASTSIDE LONG BEACH, AND

NOT ONLY THAT THEY WERE RIGHT NEXT DOOR TO THE FIRE DISPATCH CENTER ON PETERSON, AND GOT AT LEAST 10-15 CALLS A DAY.

SOMETIMES I WOULD BRING DONUTS AND ICE CREAM FOR THE FIREFIGHTERS THAT WERE ON DUTY THEN WHEN A CALL WOULD COME THROUGH, I WOULD JUMP ON THE ENGINE WITH THEM, I WAS EVEN DROPPED OFF ONE NIGHT BY ENGINE 10.

PYROMANIAC IS AN "IMPULSE CONTROL DISORDER" AND I CAN SAY I HAD AN UNCONTROLLABLE IMPULSE TO START FIRES AND ACTED ON IMPULSES "WITHOUT MUCH CEREBRAL SCANNING." AND I KEPT ON GOING AT IT, UNTIL I GOT THE DESIRE THAT I WAS LOOKING FOR WHICH WAS THE **EXCITEMENT. MY IMPULSIVITY WAS VERY HIGH BUT I DO THINK THAT AFTER 12 ½ YEARS OF CONFINEMENT MY RISK OF FIRESETTING HAS BEEN DOWNGRADED TO MODERATE.**

I'M NOT GONNA SIT HERE AND LIE AND SAY THAT MY RISK LEVEL IS LOW, AS I PROVIDE MY OWN RISK ASSESSMENT BECAUSE WITHOUT MY OWN REHABILITATION, PSYCHOANALYSIS, AND INSIGHT NOW THAT I DO POSSESS THOSE ATTRIBUTES IT'S VERY EASY FOR ME TO DECIPHER MY PROBLEM, AND LOCATE A FEASIBLE SOLUTION. I MUST ADAMANTLY STATE THAT IF I WERE TO BE RELEASED NOW I'M BETTER OFF THAN I WAS WHEN I WAS 22 YEARS OLD. I WAS IMMATURE IN AGE, AND HAD MIXED UP PRIORITIES, BUT THE PRISON SYSTEM GAVE ME THE ABILITY TO CLEAN UP WHAT I MESSED UP AND START ALL OVER AGAIN.

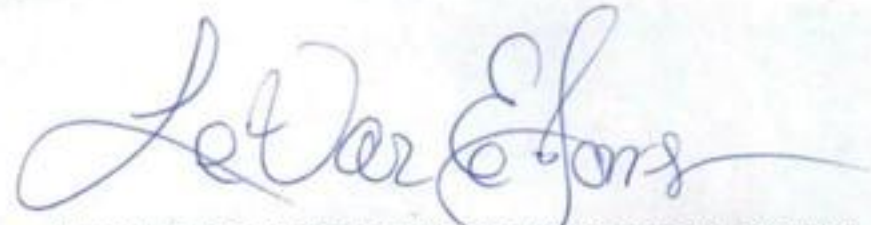
THE TATTOOS ON MY ARM REMINDS ME OF WHERE I'VE BEEN AND HOW MUCH TIME THEY GAVE ME, SO IF I GET OUT OF PRISON AND THINK ABOUT STARTING ANOTHER FIRE, IF THESE TATTOOS ON MY ARM DOESN'T PROVIDE A "FLASHBACK" AND IF IT DOESN'T OPEN MY EYES THAT I HAVE 2 STRIKES THEN I'M REALLY A DUMB ASS, AND I HAVEN'T REALLY LEARNED ANYTHING ABOUT MY PROBLEM, OR HOW TO CONTROL THE URGES TO START FIRES, NOT TO HURT PEOPLE BUT TO HAVE A WILLFUL DISREGARD FOR PROPERTY BASED ON THE PROPENSITY TO START FIRES.

I MUST AGREE THAT THIS IS A VERY UNIQUE CASE, AND THE ARSON INVESTIGATOR WAS RIGHT! PEOPLE CAN LEARN A LOT FROM ME AND NOW! I HAVE LEARNED ALOT, BUT THERE IS STILL REHABILITATION TO BE DONE. THIS PRISON SYSTEM GAVE ME A TRANSFORMED MIND, NOT A MIND THAT WAS ALL ABOUT DESTRUCTION, BUT ABOUT PERSONAL REDEMPTION, I MAY HAVE DONE THAT BACK THEN BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I'M STILL THE SAME PERSON I WAS WHEN I WAS 22.

THINGS CHANGE, AND PEOPLE CHANGE AND BEING STUCK IN PRISON FOR 18 YEARS WILL MAKE ANYBODY CHANGE THEIR WAYS OF THINKING, HOW THERE SHOULD BE CHANGE IF YOU WANT TO AVOID BEING PLACED INSIDE A CONCRETE BOX AGAIN AND AGAIN.

I'M NOT GONNA BE LIKE THE INDIVIDUALS THAT KEEP COMING BACK TO PRISON AFTER THEY ARE RELEASED AND GET STUCK INSIDE OF THAT REVOLVING DOOR. AS I PURSUE MY INVESTIGATION FURTHER INTO PYROMANIA AND IT'S TRIGGERS, COPING SKILLS, TREATMENT ETC... THEN I WILL BE ABLE TO PUT TO REST THE MONSTER THAT I'VE CREATED THAT DIDN'T WANT TO HURT ANYBODY, BUT JUST GET A LITTLE EXCITEMENT. WAY BEFORE MY RELEASE DATE THAT MONSTER WILL BE PUT TO REST.

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES FOR ME TO KEEP THAT MONSTER BURIED IN THE RUBBLE AND NEVER LET HIM SURFACE AGAIN. I'M IN THE BATTERS BOX AND GETTING OUT IF PRISON I GOT TO AVOID STRIKE 3. WHAT BETTER WAY TO DO THAT BUT TO KILL IT BEFORE IT EVER GETS A CHANCE TO START UP AGAIN.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Levar Emerson Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

FOREWORD BY LEVAR EMERSON JONES

MARCH 2, 2015

6:00PM